

In the Claims:

Amend Claim 17 as indicated below.

17. (Amended) An assay method for detecting a predetermined nucleic acid sequence in a sample, comprising:

- a) providing a sample containing nucleic acids, and a single stranded oligonucleotide probe having a sequence complementary to the predetermined nucleic acid sequence to be detected, the single stranded oligonucleotide probe comprising at least 10 bases, wherein the first base of the single stranded oligonucleotide probe is conjugated to a first fluorescent moiety and the second base of the single stranded oligonucleotide probe is conjugated to a second fluorescent moiety, the first and second bases being positioned so that upon excitation of the first fluorescent moiety, the excitation energy is transferred to the second fluorescent moiety, whereupon the second fluorescent moiety fluoresces with peak fluorescence at a wavelength which differs from the fluorescent peak of the first fluorescent moiety;
- b) contacting the sample containing nucleic acids with the single stranded oligonucleotide probe, under conditions where complementary single stranded nucleic acids hybridize, and unhybridized single stranded oligonucleotides are hydrolytically digested; and
- c) measuring fluorescent transfer between the first fluorescent moiety and the second fluorescent moiety of the single stranded oligonucleotide probe of step a), subsequent to step b).